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22 December 1964

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

CURRENT INTELLIGENCE
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*South Vietnam: [The political situation in Saigon remains fluid.]

[Key Vietnamese leaders have been meeting to try to undo some of the confusion resulting from the military's dissolution of the civilian High National Council.]

[Premier Huong met yesterday with armed forces chief General Khanh to discuss the relationships of the civilian government with the military. According to the premier, Khanh rejected as "too difficult" Huong's main proposal that the military rescind its decree dissolving the council. Khanh agreed, however, that a "committee" should be created to assume the council's task of advising on the establishment of a national assembly. He also agreed that persons arrested by the military would eventually be released, and that a general officer should be named defense minister.]

[Huong appears reluctant to force a showdown with the military at this time, although he continues to distrust Khanh. He still considers Buddhist leaders, particularly Tri Quang, whom he describes as a Communist, to be his primary enemies. Huong feels he must have the support of the "young Turk" commanders to deal with the Buddhists.]

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Belgium-Congo: Belgian Foreign Minister Spaak is trying to persuade Premier Tshombé to improve the image of the Congolese Government.

On 20 December Spaak gave Tshombé a lengthy memorandum outlining steps the Belgians think Leopoldville should take to win support from moderate African states. The Belgian recommendations include broadening Tshombé's government, holding general elections, announcing a broad political amnesty, and replacing the South African and Rhodesian mercenaries.

Tshombé was displeased by Spaak's demarche and argued that broadening his government was not in itself the answer to the problem of extremist African support to the rebels. Spaak countered by saying that Brussels feels swift implementation of its proposals is necessary not only for the Congolese Government "to save itself," but to ensure the continued flow of Belgian and US assistance.

Tshombé agreed to study the recommendations. Spaak is hoping Tshombé will bring back at least a "constructive response" when he returns to Brussels during the first week of January.

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NOTE

Ghana: In his most threatening gesture to date against important private Western economic interests in Ghana, Nkrumah has stated openly that British banks operating there face "expropriation" unless they "co-operate." The two British banks which finance the bulk of Ghana's trade with the free world have been resisting the Ghanaian Government's pressure for extraordinary foreign exchange credits. Largely as a result of this controversy, commercial shipments to Ghana have been sharply curtailed and serious commodity shortages are looming.

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